

# Continuing Medical Education

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## Toward Improving Postgraduate Medical Education

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"POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION for the practicing physician is inadequate, inefficient, and ineffective." This statement would probably receive supporters from physicians in all walks of life, whether they be in practice, academic medicine, or medical administration. The concern of the practicing physician that medical schools do not provide many postgraduate experiences which are helpful to them in daily practice, coupled with the concern of the faculty member that the practicing physician is not really interested in academic medicine, creates a frustrating and difficult situation.

Teaching methodology in postgraduate medical education also has received its share of complaints. For the most part, the complaints are centered about the inadequacies of the teacher and his presentation and the fact that presentations are usually based on passive techniques. In addition the subject matter itself is often not relevant to the problems of the practicing physician. It is somewhat surprising that despite the dissatisfaction with the current approach to postgraduate education for the practicing physician, medical school faculties and the practicing community spend tremendous amounts of time, energy, and money in striving to utilize postgraduate medical education to help physicians provide patients with the best medical care possible.

The desire of physicians in the California Medical Association and the faculties of the various schools of medicine within the State to seek better

ways in postgraduate education has been guiding the California Medical Association to take steps to work with the medical schools in improving postgraduate medical experiences. To this end, several important studies in the field of postgraduate medical education are being undertaken. It is hoped that these studies will ultimately provide the medical school faculties with an understanding of the subject matter that will be most beneficial to the physician in his quest to offer the finest in medical care. In addition, it may be hoped that the studies will provide medical school faculties information that will allow them to develop improved techniques in teaching the practicing physician.

In order to begin to evaluate various teaching techniques it will, of course, be necessary to enlist the active support of the members of the California Medical Association. The chief support that will be required will be participation in some of the experiments which will test teaching techniques. This might mean participating in a postgraduate session in which the effectiveness of one type of teaching technique would be compared with another. Testing for information-gains in these experiments will be aimed at evaluating the teaching technique and not the physician himself.

It is hoped that participation in experiments in medical education will be well received by members of the California Medical Association. It is perhaps not too much to expect that the participation will be interesting and even exciting. In all events, the cooperation of the members of the CMA and medical school faculties should lead to providing physicians with significantly better postgraduate programs than are now available.

Physicians representing the practicing community of the West Coast counties have already indicated interest in this project by agreeing to have a portion of the CMA Institute, to be held March 2 and 3, 1967 at Pebble Beach, devoted to an experiment in teaching techniques. It is hoped that all of the physicians present will participate actively in this project which could be a step toward improving the educational experience available to the physician in the State.